

planning a celebration of life checklist

1 Set a Budget

Before you can begin planning a celebration of life, it's important to talk with your family and come to a consensus on a budget. Once you know what you are able to spend, you can begin to look at how you want to honor your loved one and what the celebration of life will include.

2 Decide Where & When

This is where the planning really begins. Before you decide on a date for the celebration of life, make sure to find out any scheduling conflicts your family might have. This is especially important if family members live far away and you need to make travel arrangements to get there.

3 Decide Who Will Lead the Event

Although a celebration of life is often more casual than a funeral service, it's still a good idea to decide who will lead the event. If your loved one was religious, you may want to invite their local religious leader. Some families will choose to hire a non-denominational celebrant to oversee the event.

4 Pick Activities

If you want to make the celebration of life special and unique, consider organizing an activity for guests to take part in. The activity could be as simple as a craft station for guests to create a keepsake to take home or as elaborate as a fireworks display. For celebration of life ideas for groups, check out some idea suggestions below.

5 Food & Beverages

Food and drinks are an important part of any event. Food brings people together and can create opportunities for guests to share memories with one another. Some families serve hors d'oeuvres and others will host a meal. In either case, think about some of your loved one's favorite food and drinks and try to serve them during the event.

6 Decide on Audio & Visuals

Technology can play an important role in honoring a loved one and paying tribute to them. Memorial videos, slideshows, and music playlists can help create a warm atmosphere of remembrance. If you want to include this special touch, talk to your funeral director about your technology needs and consider the following questions: What audio/visual equipment is needed? What pictures, videos, and other content do you want to display? How will these choices help honor the deceased and celebrate their life?

7 Speakers at the Event

At some point during almost every celebration of life, there will be an opportunity for someone to say a few words. These can be more formal speeches like a eulogy or just a simple toast to the deceased and thanking guests for coming. Next, it's important to decide who will have the opportunity to speak. Will there be prepared speeches or an open floor for guests to share stories and memories if they wish? Below are some questions to consider when selecting your speakers: Will the service be formal or informal? Do you want to leave the floor open for guests to speak? What family members or friends do you think would like to say something? Do you want to include readings or prayers?

8 Mementos & Keepsakes

If you want to show your appreciation, consider buying or creating some small personal keepsakes for guests to take home. It could be as simple as a packet of memorial seeds to plant in a garden or as personal as hand written notes from the family thanking guests for coming. In either case, having something for guests to take home with them shows that your family is thankful that they chose to come and provides guests with a physical item to help honor the deceased's memory.

9 Send Out Invitations

Last but certainly not least, it's time to create a guest list and send out invitations. Once you know the where and when, you can start putting a guest list together. Think of everyone that would want to be there and add them to the list. Once you're ready to send out invitations, you might want to ask guests to RSVP. Doing so will help you make sure you have enough food, drinks, and keepsakes for the celebration of life.